

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 5493

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, GE, GW
SUBJECT: GDR FOREIGN MINISTRY AND FRG PERMREP OFFICIALS COMMENT ON
INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS

REF:(A) USBER 701 (B) BERLIN 5349

SUMMARY

ALTHOUGH THE HEAT, TENSION, AND PUBLIC ACRIMONY OF RECENT
WEEKS IN INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS APPEAR TO HAVE ABATED, THE
POSSIBILITY OF SIGNIFICANT FORWARD MOVEMENT SOON IN
FRG/GDR REALTIONS SEEMS SLIGHT. GDR MFA WEST GERMAN
DIVISION CHIEF SEIDEL SUGGESTS THAT, WHILE VARIOUS
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NEGOTIATIONS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES ARE UNDERWAY OR WILL
TAKE PLACE SHORTLY, THE TIME IS AT HAND TO CONSIDER
DISCUSSION OF " MORE BASIC PROBLEMS". FRG PERMREP CHIEF
GAUS SAYS THAT BONN HAS NO REAL FIX ON WHICH WAY EAST
BERLIN WANTS TO MOVE AT THE PRESENT. IN A SENSE, EACH
SIDE IS LLOOKING FOR SIGNALS FROM THE OTHER. THESE ARE
THE HIGHLIGHTS OF DISCUSSIONS EMBASSY OFFICERS HAD

MARCH 8 WITH SEIDEL AND MARCH 10 WITH GAUS. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING AN HOUR AND TEN MINUTE DISCUSSION MARCH 8 AT MFA WITH CHARGE AND EMBOFF, WEST GERMAN DIVISION CHIEF SEIDEL TALKED FREELY ON A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF FRG/GDR RELATIONS. SEIDEL SAID THAT WHILE RELATIONS HAVE BEEN "BURDENED" SINCE MID-1976, ALL WAS NOT " DEAD AND QUIET." HE SAID THE BORDER COMMISSION WOULD MEET THIS WEEK (ND MARCH 11 ANNOUNCED IT HAD MET MARCH 9-10, AND NOTED IT WOULD MEET AGAIN APRIL 27-28) BUT WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC IT WOULD FIND A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO THE ELBE PROBLEM IN THE NEAR FUTURE. NEGOTIATIONS ON THE SCIENTIFIC/TECHNICAL AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS WILL TAKE PLACE IN APRIL. WITHRESPECT TO THE 25 SMALL STEPS, SEIDEL SAID THE GDR HAD DONE ALL IT COULD AND IMPLIED EAST BERLIN WOULD NOT RESPOND POSITIVELY ON THE REMAINING 18 POINTS.

2. IN SEIDEL'S VIEW , THE TIME HAS COME TO CONSIDER " MORE BASIC PROBLEMS. WHILE HE WAS NOT SPECIFIC AND WOULD NOT BE PINNED DOWN ABOUT POSSIBLE INITIATIVE/PROPOSALS THE GDR WOULD MAKE,WE GAINED THE IMPRESSION THEY INTEND TO MOVE TO THE QUESTIONOF CITIZENSHIP AND TO ELICIT FROM BONN AGREEMENT THAT " NORMALIZATION" CAN NO LONGER BE ON A "GERMAN" BASIS, BUT ON THE BASIS OF TWO SOVEREIGN STATES. IT WAS SEIDEL'S OPINION THAT MUCH BONN HAS DONE SINCE THE BASIC AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED WAS DIRECTED AGAINST ACCEPTANCE OF SOVEREIGNTY OF TWO GERMAN STATES.

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3. ON THE GAUS AND HONECKER INTERVIEWS, SEIDLE HAD PRAISE FOR GAUS, SAYING HE HAD SEEN MANY THINGS REALISTICALLY, PARTICULARLY THAT THE PRESENT FRG APPROACH TO THE GDR THREATENED TO BLOCK RELATIONS. SEIDEL ASSERTED HONECKER'S INTERVIEW GAVE " CLEAR" ANSWERS TO FRG/GDR RELATIONS, INCLUDING THE " CENTRAL" PROBLEM OF CITIZENSHIP. HE AVOIDED ANSWERING A QUESTION ON HOW, IN HIS VIEW, BONN HAD ASSESSED HONCEKER'S INTERVIEW. HE DID STATE HONECKER'S REMARK ABOUT WHETHER " INFLAMED" FRG CITIZENS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO VISIT THE GDR WAS INTENDED AS AN "INDICATION" (HINWEIS) THAT BONN SHOULD CAREFULLY CONSIDER ITS APPROACH TO THE GDR, AND PARTICULARLY THE " CONSTANT" MEDIA ATTACKS ON THE GDR. HE ADDED THE GDR DID NOT PLAN TO CHANGE ITS APPROACH ON FAMILY REUNIFICATION, TRAVEL TO THE FRG FOR EMERGENCY REASONS, OR THE MINIMUM AGE FOR TRAVEL TO THE FRG.

4. IN ADDITION TO THE FOREGOING, SEIDEL ALSO DISCUSSED RECENT DIFFERENT TREATMENT OF THE FRG IN GDR AND SOVIET/

POLISH MEDIA (HE DISCOUNTED THE IMPORTANCE OF ANY DIFFERENCE); FRG/GDR TRADE (BONN COULD NOT USE TRADE AS A LEVER), AND LONG TERM FRG DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS (A CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT COULD NOT BE RULED OUT; IF IT DID TAKE OVER, WE WOULD ONCE AGAIN BE IN A COLD WAR). A DETAILED AIRGRAM ON SEIDEL'S CONVERSATION FOLLOWS.

5. ON MARCH 10, CHARGE DISCUSSED FRG/GDR RELATIONS WITH FRG PERMREP CHIEF GAUS AND BRIEFED HIM ON HIGHLIGHTS OF MARCH 8 MEETING WITH SEIDEL. GAUS ALLUDED TO MARCH 7 BONN SUMMIT MEETING (REF A), NOTING THAT THE WESTERN AMBASSADORS HAD BEEN BRIEFED MARCH 9. THEREFORE, HE WOULD NOT GO OVER DETAILS OF THAT SESSION, BUT DID TICK OFF BERLIN ITEMS ALONG LINES OF GAUS-SEMLER DISCUSSION. WITH RESPECT TO THE MARCH 7 MEETING, GAUS MADE SEVERAL COMMENTS: (1) NO DECISIONS HAD BEEN MADE ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THE GDR; (2) THE FRG SIMPLY HAS NO CLEAR IDEA WHICH

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WAY TH GDR WANTS TO GO IN ITS RELATIONS WITH BONN; (3) THE MATTER OF HOW BONN SHOULD TRY TO INTERCEDE ON BEHALF OF GDR CITIZENS WHOSE APPLICATIONS FOR EMERGENCY VISITS TO THE FRG REMAINS OPEN (REFTEL (B)); AND (4) HE HAD THE IMPRESSION " EVERYONE" AT THE MEETING WAS WAITING TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN US/USSR RELATIONS AFTER SECRETARY VANCE'S TRIP TO MOSCOW AS WELL AS THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS A NEW ELEMENT IN US FOREIGN POLICY.

6. ON FRG/GDR TRADE AND THE BERLIN " PACKAGE" OR " CHAIN" GAUS SAID HE DID NOT THINK THERE WAS MUCH IN IT FOR THE GDR, BUT THEY NEED EVERY MARK THEY CAN GET. HE NOTED THAT THE PERMREP HAD HARD INFORMATION THAT WITHIN THE PAST WEEK THE GDR HAD GIVEN ITALIAN FIRMS THE 700 MILLION STEEL MILL PROJECT THAT SALZGITTER HAD BEEN CONFIDENT OF RECEIVING. AS A RESULT, THE FRG TOOK THE NEWS OF THE LOSS OF THE CONTRACT AS A POLITICAL SIGNAL OF GDR DISINTEREST IN SEEKING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS, AND BONN WOULD HAVE LESS " LEVERAGE" ON THE GDR. (HE ASKED THAT THIS INFORMATION BE CLOSELY HELD FOR THE TIME BEING). AT THE SAME TIME, HE NOTED CYNICALLY THAT HONECKER WOULD VISIT THE SALZGITTER STAND AT THE LEIPZIG FAIR.

7. WITH RESPECT TO SEIDEL'S REMARKS, GAUS WANTED TO KNOW IF HE HAD GIVEN ANY INDICATION OF WHICH DIRECTION THE GDR WANTED TO MOVE RE THE FRG, AND WE SAID NO. SIMILARLY, SEIDEL HAD NOT INDICATED WHAT OR HOW THE " BASIC QUESTIONS" SHOULD BE DISCUSSED. IT WAS GAUS' VIEW THAT EACH SIDE SEEMED TO WAITING FOR SIGNALS FROM THE OTHER SIDE, WITH BOTH SIDES PERHAPS MISSING OR MISUNDERSTANDING

THE SIGNALS WHAT MIGHT BE PASSED.

8. ON THE SPECIFIC NEGOTIATIONS SEIDEL HAD MENTIONED,
GAUS SAID HE DOES NOT SEE ANY POSSIBILITY FOR REAL
MOVEMENT. THE BORDER COMMISSION IS HUNG UP ON THE ELBE
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PROBLEM; UNLESS THE EAST GERMANS ARE WILLING TO SET
IT ASIDE FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION, NOT MUCH CAN BE DONE TO
MOVE THE ISSUE TO A SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION IN THE
NEAR FUTURE. THE SCIENCE AGREEMENT AWAITS THE OUTCOME
OF THE FRG/USSR SCIENCE AGREEMENT AND HOW BERLIN IS
INCLUDED, AND THE LEGAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT IS HUNG UP
ON THE CITIZENSHIP QUESTION, AND THEGDR KNOWS BONN'S
POSITION.

9. COMMENT: BASED ON OUR CONVERSATION WITH SEIDEL AND
GAUS, WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT NEITHER SIDE EXPECTS
MUCH SIGNIFICANT FORWARD MOVEMENT SOON IN RELATIONS.
THE EAST GERMANS APPEAR CONTENT TO LET BONN TAKE THE
INITIATIVE AND PERHAPS WILL MAKE SOME STIFF DEMANDS
FOR IMPROVEMENT. AND THE WEST GERMANS APPEAR TO BE
GROPING.

10. THIS WAS OUR FIRST MEETING WITH SEIDEL, AND HE
CAME ACROSS AS A RELATIVELY OPEN, MODERATE PERSON.
HE SAID HE WOULD BE PLEASED AT ANY TIME TO DISCUSS
FRG/GDR RELATIONS AND WE INTEND TO TAKE HIM UP ON
HIS OFFER AS APPROPRIATE. THE EAST GERMANS APPEAR TO
BE MAKING A PARTICULAR EFFORT TO FACILITATE EMBASSY
REQUESTS FOR APPOINTMENTS, WE WERE INFORMED THIS WEEK
THAT REQUESTS BY THE CHARGE TO MEET WITH SED CENTRAL
COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS AND TO VISIT HALLE ARE ON
THE TRACKS FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF APRIL AND MID-APRIL
RESPECTIVELY.

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